

# Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Handbook

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Updated March 21, 2025





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# 2025 Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Handbook

## Introduction

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NCG and our co-ops are thrilled you are participating in Focus on Fresh 2025!

At this year's expanded event, you'll have opportunities to connect with, educate and gather valuable insights directly from retail buyers in co-op produce, deli, bakery, cheese, meat and seafood departments — the people who understand co-op shoppers the best. All exhibitors will enjoy enhanced amenities at our larger Vendor Showcase venue, Saint Paul RiverCentre.

The Focus on Fresh conference runs Tuesday, June 24, through Wednesday, June 25. For exhibitors, the primary participation opportunity is the Vendor Showcase, taking place on Wednesday, June 25. Exhibitor and sponsor participation continues with the Focus on Fresh Party, held the evening of June 25 from 5:30pm to 9:00pm at Amsterdam Bar & Hall in downtown St. Paul.

We're expecting more than 400 attendees from over 200 of our NCG co-op locations. Once we've finalized the retailer registration list, we'll provide you with additional details on the participants.

**Show Deals at the Vendor Showcase!** Retail co-op attendees love show deals, and show deals work great to spark purchases and increase volume. Learn more about how you can make the most of show deals and leads capture. Attend the "Focus on Fresh Show Deals: Maximize Your ROI" webinar on Monday, April 7, at 12:00pm Central Time. [Sign up for the webinar here.](#)

Additional participation opportunities are available to exhibitors during Focus on Fresh through event sponsorships. We offer opportunities to sponsor specific events, attendee experiences, and to provide items for inclusion the swag bag, all in addition to attending the Vendor Showcase. Please see the [Focus on Fresh Sponsorship Guide](#) for complete details and benefits. Attendance at events other than the Vendor Showcase and Focus on Fresh Party are limited to companies that participate in sponsorships.

Thank you for your support of Focus on Fresh and NCG member co-ops. We look forward to seeing you in June!



## General Information

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### Conference Location

All Focus on Fresh conference activities, including the Vendor Showcase, will take place at:  
[Saint Paul RiverCentre](#)  
175 West Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55102

The Focus on Fresh Party will be held at:  
[Amsterdam Bar & Hall](#)  
6th and Wabasha  
St. Paul, MN 55102

### Lodging Information

Exhibitors are responsible for making their own travel and lodging reservations. We recommend reserving your lodging as soon as possible, as downtown area hotels are expected to sell out quickly. There are many hotels in [downtown St. Paul](#) within walking distance to Saint Paul RiverCentre and Amsterdam Bar & Hall.

NCG's corporate room rates are available to exhibitors that book at our hotel partners near NCG's main office. *Please note: These hotels are not within walking distance to Saint Paul RiverCentre; they are located in Minneapolis, approximately 15 minutes by car to downtown St. Paul.*

#### **Graduate by Hilton**

615 Washington Avenue SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
Phone reservations: 1-800-774-1500 (Client ID - N3438578)  
Online reservations: [Reservation Link](#)

#### **Hampton Inn & Suites Minneapolis University Area**

2812 University Avenue SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
Phone reservations: 612-259-8797 (ask for the "NCG rate")  
Online reservations: [Reservation Link](#)



## Exhibitor Participation Schedule

Tuesday, June 24, 2025			
Time	Event	Location	Exhibitors
1:00pm-4:00pm	Check-in and set-up for Vendor Showcase	RiverCentre Exhibit Hall	All exhibitors

Wednesday, June 25, 2025			
Time	Event	Location	Exhibitors
8:00am-2:00pm	Check-in and set-up for Vendor Showcase	RiverCentre Exhibit Hall	All Exhibitors
11:00am-12:00pm	Partner Education Workshop	RiverCentre Room locations TBD	Promoter Exhibitors
12:00pm-1:00pm	Exhibitor Lunch	RiverCentre Room location TBD	Exhibitors that pre-ordered
1:00pm-2:00pm	Partner Education Workshop	RiverCentre Room locations TBD	Promoter Exhibitors
2:00pm-5:00pm	Vendor Showcase	RiverCentre Exhibit Hall	All Exhibitors
5:00pm-6:00pm	Breakdown and clean-up after Vendor Showcase	RiverCentre Exhibit Hall	All Exhibitors
5:30pm-9:00pm	Focus on Fresh Party	Amsterdam Bar & Hall	All Exhibitors

### Vendor Showcase Participation

**Supporter Exhibitors** may have up to **two (2)** representatives participate in the Vendor Showcase and Wednesday evening party.

**Collaborator Exhibitors** may have up to **two (2)** representatives participate in the Vendor Showcase and Wednesday evening party. Includes expanded booth presence with “classroom” or meeting space within booth.

**Promoter Exhibitors** may have up to **three (3)** representatives participate in the Vendor Showcase and Wednesday evening party. In addition, Promoter Exhibitors will present educational workshops on Wednesday morning.

Additional badges for brand representatives can be purchased during online registration and will be available for purchase at the Vendor Showcase check-in table on Wednesday, June 25. Additional badges are \$50 and allow access to the Vendor Showcase and Focus on Fresh Party.

In past years, some exhibitors have expressed interest in hosting their own event during, or at a time or location adjacent to, Focus on Fresh (e.g., during the evening after the day’s



programming is complete or the night before Focus on Fresh begins). *These ancillary events are prohibited.* We welcome your ideas for ways we can work together to make Focus on Fresh even better for our co-ops. If you've got an idea for something your brand would like to do for our co-ops during Focus on Fresh, please contact the [Vendor Showcase Team](#) to see if we can work with you to make it a reality.

## **Exhibitor and Sponsorship Fees**

Exhibitors that pay for the Supporter (base level) sponsorship during registration are invoiced for the balance of additional sponsorships plus any outstanding add-ons. All other exhibitors are invoiced for the sponsorship fee, inclusive of selected additional sponsorships, and selected add-ons. Invoices will be emailed to exhibitor billing contacts starting May 7, 2025, and payment terms are net 21. NCG reserves the right to cancel an exhibitor's registration and reassign it to another exhibitor if payment is not received by May 28, 2025. Please pass this information on to your company's billing contact.

## **Focus on Fresh Party**

Registered exhibitors are invited to join us at Amsterdam Bar & Hall, located at 6th and Wabasha in downtown St. Paul, for the Focus on Fresh Party on Wednesday, June 25, from 5:30pm to 9:00pm, following the Vendor Showcase. There will be beverages, hors d'oeuvres, plenty of networking, music and lots of fun! Your exhibitor fee includes admission of your company's representatives to the party. This event is only for registered exhibitors and attendees; no additional or outside guests are allowed.

## **Registration**

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### **Complete Your Registration by April 23**

**Exhibitor registration is now open!** Visit the [Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Information page](#) to complete the registration by April 23, 2025.

After completing your registration, you will receive an email that confirms your registration has been received.

## **Preparation and Shipping**

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### **Vendor Showcase**

The Focus on Fresh Vendor Showcase is a tabletop show designed as an opportunity for you to educate NCG co-op staff, discuss specific attributes of your brand, showcase items that are trending favorably in sales, highlight new items and sample your products. This year, show deals will be a part of Focus on Fresh! (See details below.)

The Vendor Showcase will be held in the Saint Paul RiverCentre Exhibit Hall and will be open to conference attendees from 2:00pm to 5:00pm on Wednesday, June 25. All exhibitors may begin



setting up between 1:00pm and 4:00pm on Tuesday, June 24, or between 8:00am and 2:00pm on Wednesday, June 25. **Set-up must be completed by 2:00pm on Wednesday.** NCG staff will be present to assist you with check-in and answer any questions you may have.

A layout of tables in the Vendor Showcase exhibit hall and table number assignments will be available on the [Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Information page](#) after May 20. This event is in a tabletop format (not booths like at larger shows). Each Supporter Exhibitor will have one 8-foot table to set up a display representing your company. Collaborator Exhibitors will have two 8-foot tables. Promoter Exhibitors will have three 6-foot tables. **This is a tabletop show; please keep displays relatively simple.**

## Show Deals

All Focus on Fresh exhibitors have the option to offer show deals plus capture leads. To learn more, **attend the “Focus on Fresh Show Deals: Maximize Your ROI” webinar on Monday, April 7, at 12:00pm Central Time.** [Sign up for the webinar here.](#)

More information about how to submit your show deals will be posted on the [Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Information page](#). Be sure to review the 2025 Focus on Fresh Terms for exhibitor show deal requirements.

Co-op buyers can place orders while at the Vendor Showcase, and the ordering portal remains open after the show so that they can continue to place orders through July 9, 2025. Exhibitors should watch their inbox for show deal reports starting July 14.

## Prizes and Trips

To encourage buyers to visit your company's table, exhibitors are encouraged to offer prizes or trips (e.g., to visit your company and learn more about your products). Throughout the Vendor Showcase, NCG will announce the prize winners. Prizes should be valued at a minimum of \$250. Please consider that attendees will need to be able to travel with any prizes you offer and will not have the ability to store anything perishable during their stay.

If your company would like to supply something for our prize giveaway and you didn't indicate that when you completed your registration, please contact the [Vendor Showcase Team](#).

In addition to prizes, sponsors are encouraged to award a trip experience to one or more retailers in a prize drawing during the event. Trips are a great opportunity to have an ambassador from a food co-op visit your production or growing facilities, learn about what makes your products different and better, and engage with your products more deeply. NCG will manage the prize drawings and announcements of winners. If your company would like to offer a trip to one or more of our retailers, please contact the [Vendor Showcase Team](#).

## Swag Bag Inclusions

Each co-op attendee receives a swag bag upon arrival at Focus on Fresh. Contributing to the swag bag is a great way to get your items into the hands of buyers at the beginning of the conference, giving them a chance to sample your product or gain awareness of your brand prior



to the Vendor Showcase. Ideal items for the swag bag are product samples or small promotional items that are easy to travel with. **If you would like to provide items for inclusion in the swag bag, please contact the [Vendor Showcase Team](#) no later than Thursday, May 1.**

All items for inclusion in attendee swag bags must be delivered between Thursday, May 1, and Friday, June 6, and shipped to:

Bolger Direct  
ATTN: NCG Focus on Fresh  
668 Kasota Ave SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

## Guidelines for Vendor Showcase

### Allowed:

- One (1) exhibitor company is allowed at each table space, with up to two (2) representatives allowed at each table for Supporter and Collaborator Exhibitors, or three (3) representatives for Promoter Exhibitors.
- Simple displays of products that fit the table space and include what you want to highlight, such as new and unique products.
- Floor displays or backdrops for displaying or hanging banners may be used if they do not physically hinder the experience of neighboring exhibitors or block traffic flow in the aisles. Simple banners behind your table are preferred. A covered and skirted table and a tabletop sign with your company's name will be provided.
- Distributing samples is encouraged. Pre-packed takeaway samples are encouraged to be small enough for traveling attendees to take on a plane in their carry-on luggage.
- **You are responsible for providing your own demo supplies and we encourage them to be compostable.** There will be a commercial composting stream as a part of show waste management. NCG encourages you to bring PFAS-free compostable service items.
- Product slicks, flyers, catalogs, promotional calendars, deal and demo info, and product coupons are allowed, but must be taken with you at the end of the show or recycled.
- **Cooking using a hot plate, convection oven, microwave or similar. No deep fryers.** A fee of \$150 will be charged for access to electricity. Please bring a drop cord of 15'-25' and a power strip to facilitate taking that power the last few feet in your table space. NCG reserves the right to deny requests for electricity based on availability and an exhibitor's need. Requests for electricity on the day prior to or day of show will be accommodated if possible. The rate for electricity requested on the day of show is \$200.
- Contact information for your company's representatives in each geographic region — Focus on Fresh is a national conference and co-ops from all regions will be represented.
- Small company gifts are allowed (e.g., pens, calculators, magnets, etc.).
- Training and customer service materials are highly encouraged.
- Providing great education, networking and having fun!





### **NOT allowed:**

- More than one (1) exhibitor brokerage or company at each table space.
- Offering show deals/discounts not published in our meeting program at the showcase.
- Floor displays or backdrops for displaying or hanging banners that physically hinder the experience of neighboring exhibitors or block traffic flow in the aisle.
- Food prep beyond simple cutting, washing or similar actions.
- **The use of deep fryers.**
- Using bathroom floor drains or sinks to dispose of water or food.
- Parking at the loading area for more than 15 minutes.
- **Leaving products and waste at your table at the end of the show.** Please plan on boxing up all leftover products; recycling any glass, aluminum or plastic containers; breaking down additional boxes and leaving your table cleaned up. A food bank will pick up any unopened leftover perishable and non-perishable product after the show. Products for donation will need to be placed in designated collection locations.

### **Show Floor Layout and Booth Numbers**

Watch the [Focus on Fresh Exhibitor Information page](#) after May 20 to access the show floor layout and booth numbers.

### **Ice Pricing**

Bags of ice will be available for the show: \$15 for an 18-lb bag. Ice ordered during registration will be included on the sponsorship invoice. We will have limited quantities of ice for sale at the show, available for purchase using a credit card at the registration table.

### **Food Prep Equipment**

If you are planning to cook at your table, please keep the following limitations in mind:

- **Deep fryers and open flames are not allowed.**
- You may use a microwave, toaster oven, pizza oven, air fryer or another similar electric appliance.
- **You must bring something to place under your cooking appliance that will shield the table and tablecloth from heat.** A cutting board or similar item is ideal. Our provider has had both tablecloths and the tables themselves suffer damage from the types of cooking appliances listed above.

### **Cold Food Storage and Food Preparation**

The Saint Paul RiverCentre exhibit hall show floor has two concession stands which will be available to all attendees for food storage and prep. These concession stands also have triple sinks for washing service wares and some table space for basic cutting and other prep. There is no prep equipment available for use, so please plan to bring a knife, cutting board and whatever else you may need for food prep.



## Load-In

Vendor Showcase load-in hours are:

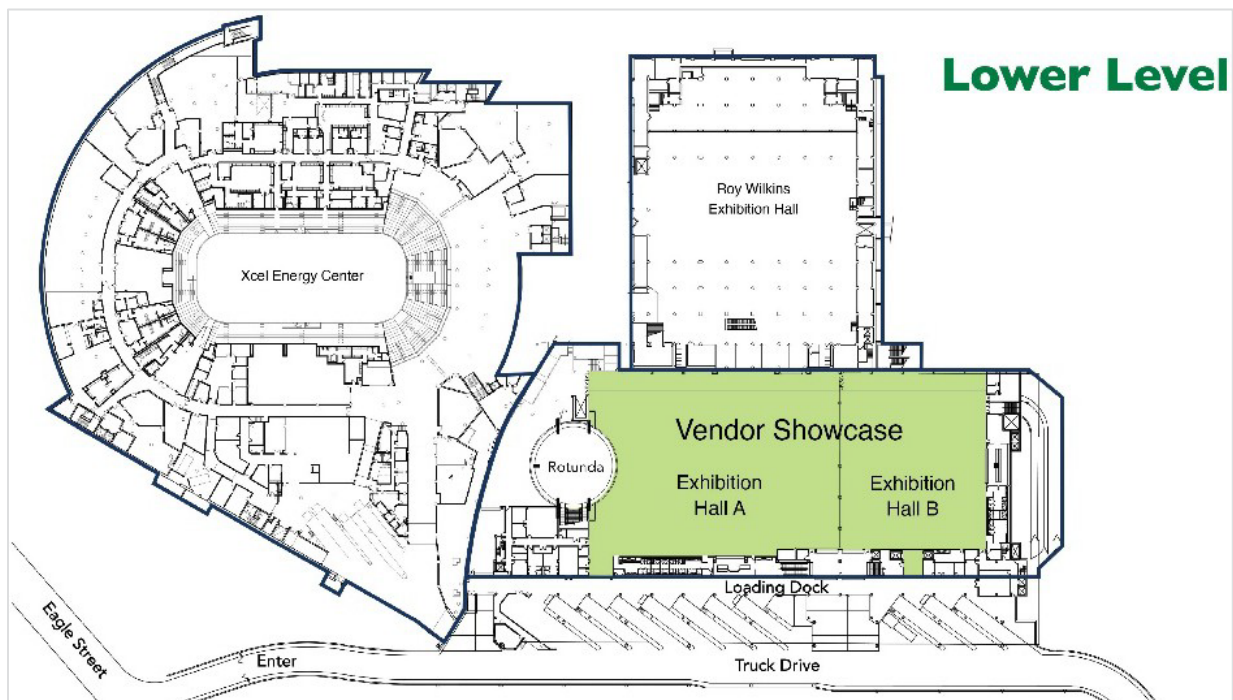
- Tuesday, June 24 — 1:00pm to 4:00pm
- Wednesday, June 25 — 8:00am to 2:00pm

## Directions

For Vendor Showcase load-in at Saint Paul RiverCentre on Tuesday and Wednesday, please be sure to put this address into your navigation: **310 Eagle Street, St. Paul, MN.**

Once you are close to Saint Paul RiverCentre and you turn onto Eagle Street from Kellogg Blvd., follow the signs for the loading dock. The loading dock is the primary means for delivering cargo from your vehicle to the show floor. Using other entrances to bring significant cargo to the show will be arduous and inconvenient.

This map of Saint Paul RiverCentre's lower level shows the loading dock area in relation to the Vendor Showcase exhibit hall:



## Parking and Unloading

Exhibitors will unload at the Saint Paul RiverCentre loading dock at 310 Eagle Street. You will have 15 minutes to unload vehicles. Once vehicles are unloaded, exhibitors will need to exit the loading dock for parking. Personal vehicle parking is available at the RiverCentre Parking Ramp (150 West Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102).



If you are bringing items to the show floor yourself, try to bring a handcart of some sort to assist with loading in and out. There are collapsible versions that are very compact. There will likely be a shortage of carts available for vendor load in and out at Focus on Fresh.

If you need to park a vehicle that is taller than 6'9" and has a gross vehicle weight of 5000lbs or more, please contact Jeremy Nelson with Reef Parking, who will be able to assist with parking options: [Jeremy.Nelson@reimaginedparking.com](mailto:Jeremy.Nelson@reimaginedparking.com), phone 651-223-5795.

## Day of Show

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### Additional Tables

If you would like to have an extra table in your space for cooking or other preparation of samples, please contact our [Vendor Showcase Team](#). With advance notice, we can provide either an additional 4' or 6' table. All tables are 30" deep and cost \$75.

### Extra Badges

Each Supporter and Collaborator Exhibitor gets two badges for the Vendor Showcase. Promoter Exhibitors receive three badges. All vendor attendees must have a badge. Additional badges will be available at vendor check-in on the morning of Wednesday, June 25. Extra badges are \$50 and can be paid for via credit card at the registration table.

### Lanyards

NCG will provide basic badge holders and lanyards for Vendor Showcase attendees. We encourage you to bring your own lanyard or badge holder if you have one. Using your own branded kit is a great way to reduce waste and showcase your brand.

### Lunch Options

**New this year, we're offering a lunch option for the day of the Vendor Showcase!** Lunch needs to be pre-ordered during registration. Gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options are available. Additionally, the Headwaters Café located onsite at RiverCentre will be open 7:30am to 2:00pm and can provide a limited capacity for meals.

## After Show

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### After-Show Exhibitor Reports

Co-ops can place orders in the show portal until 11:59pm Central Time on Wednesday, July 9, 2025. Watch your email for your show orders report starting July 14.



## Venue Information

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The Focus on Fresh Vendor Showcase will be held at:

[Saint Paul RiverCentre](#)  
175 West Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55102

### **Parking**

The RiverCentre Parking Ramp is closest to the meeting venue. This parking ramp is located directly across Kellogg Boulevard from Saint Paul RiverCentre and connected via skyway system. You are encouraged to use the City of Saint Paul's [interactive parking map](#) to find a variety of parking options within walking distance of the RiverCentre complex.

RiverCentre security is available to escort visitors to the parking lot. **Call 651-265-4847.**

### **Internet Access**

Wi-Fi in RiverCentre is complimentary. The network is "**RC\_FreeWifi**" and recommended for casual browsing.

### **Accessibility and ADA**

Curbside drop-off for wheelchairs and sidewalk curb cut-outs are located at the main entrance on Kellogg Boulevard, as well as at the Rice Park entrance, located at the corner of Washington Street and 4th Street. Automatic doors are located at the entrances to Saint Paul RiverCentre along Kellogg Boulevard, as well as at the Rice Park entrance, located at Washington Street and 4th Street. Inside Saint Paul RiverCentre, meeting rooms, exhibit halls and public areas are all served by conveniently located elevators. Restrooms and drinking fountains throughout the building are wheelchair accessible.

### **Balloons**

Helium balloons are prohibited in booths unless they are properly secured to a fixed surface for the duration of an event. Distribution of helium balloons is strictly prohibited. If a helium balloon gets released, there will be retrieval fees.

### **Banners**

Call the Exhibitors Services line at 651-265-4875 if you need to hang a banner in your booth.

### **Business Center**

Loffler Business Center, located in Saint Paul RiverCentre, can fulfill your copying, binding, printing and signage needs. Exhibitors are encouraged to submit business center orders before arrival. By doing so, shipping fees (FedEx, UPS, etc.) will be eliminated. Final products can be delivered directly to your booth or registration desk upon your arrival. The Business Center does not offer shipping services for items not ordered through them.

### **Decorative Materials**

Nothing may be taped, nailed, tacked or otherwise affixed to ceilings, painted surfaces, fire sprinklers, columns, fabric or decorative walls. The release of glitter and distribution of any adhesive-backed sticker are also strictly forbidden.



All decorative materials must be non-flammable material or treated with a flame retardant solution and documentation must be available to the fire inspector. Tablecloths on display tables must be flame retardant if used near a heat source such as cooking devices (MSFC 805.2). Acoustical and decorative materials, including but not limited to cotton, hay, paper, straw, moss, bamboo and woodchips, shall be treated with flame retardant (MSFC 805.1 & NFPA 705).

### **Firearms**

NCG bans firearms at all NCG events and in all events spaces. Attendees in violation of this ban will be asked to leave.

### **Hearing Impaired Services**

Hearing impaired devices are available in Saint Paul RiverCentre. To obtain a device, guests should either contact the venue in advance at 651-265-4800 or request one from a venue employee on site.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost an item? We want to help you find it. During events, lost and found items are turned in to the event promoter. Items not retrieved during an event are brought to the lost and found department within the facility. To inquire about a lost item after an event, please call 651-265-4817.

### **Nursing Mothers Room**

Saint Paul RiverCentre is equipped with two permanent nursing mothers rooms. Each features a secure room, comfortable chair, dim lighting and an electrical outlet for nursing mothers. One room is available on the ballroom level near the women's restroom and the other is located inside the women's restroom in Hall A. Both are available on a first come, first serve basis. Please note that Saint Paul RiverCentre does not provide refrigeration.

### **Restrooms**

Public restrooms are all equipped with ADA accommodations. All gender and family restrooms are available in Saint Paul RiverCentre on the upper level.

### **Skyway System**

Saint Paul RiverCentre is connected to the [downtown skyway system](#), making it easy to walk indoors to local hotels and restaurants.

### **Smoking Policy**

Under the provisions of the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act of 1975, Saint Paul RiverCentre and Roy Wilkins Auditorium are non-smoking buildings. Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, vaporizers or similar products, is not permitted within 25 feet outside any entrance or exit. This policy includes the venue's enclosed loading dock.

### **Wheelchairs/Motorized Scooters**

A limited number of wheelchairs are available to be checked out on a first come, first serve basis. Wheelchairs are to be used onsite and are not permitted to leave the property. Saint Paul RiverCentre does not provide motorized scooters.